

## **AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS**

The following listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

### **Listing of Claims:**

1. (Currently Amended) An automatic sampler comprising:  
a plurality of sample vessels; and  
a needle for collecting liquid samples sequentially from the sample vessels, said needle containing a non-noble base metal and having an outer surface coated with a first coating material that has a chemical activity lower than a chemical activity of the base metal of said needle, wherein said coating material includes a noble metal including platinum, a platinum group metal, or gold that is plated or deposited on said needle, and wherein a second coating material comprising a quartz thin film is formed on an inner surface of said needle by a chemical vapor deposition method.

Claim 2 (Cancelled)

3. (Currently Amended) An ~~automatic sampler instrument~~ comprising:  
an automatic sampler including:  
a plurality of sample vessels; and  
a needle for collecting liquid samples sequentially from the sample vessels, said needle containing a non-noble base metal and having an outer surface

coated with a coating material that has a chemical activity lower than a chemical activity of the base metal of said needle, wherein said coating material includes a synthetic resin coating including polyetheretherketone that is coated on said needle, wherein the instrument further comprises a liquid analysis apparatus for receiving the liquid samples collected by the needle.

Claim 4 (Cancelled)

5. (Currently Amended) An automatic sampler comprising:  
a plurality of sample vessels; and  
a needle for collecting liquid samples sequentially from the sample vessels, said needle containing a non-noble base metal and having an outer surface coated with a coating material that has a chemical activity lower than a chemical activity of the base metal of said needle, wherein said coating material includes a non-noble metal that has a chemical activity lower than a chemical activity of iron and is plated or deposited on said needle, said non-noble metal including nickel or chromium.

Claim 6 (Cancelled)

Claim 7 (Cancelled)

Claim 8 (Cancelled)

Claim 9 (Cancelled)

Claim 10 (Cancelled)

Claim 11 (Cancelled)

Claim 12 (Cancelled)

13. (Currently Amended) ~~An automatic sampler instrument~~ comprising:

an automatic sampler including:

a plurality of sample vessels; and

a needle for collecting liquid samples sequentially from the sample vessels, said needle containing a non-noble base metal and having an outer surface coated with a coating material that has a chemical activity lower than a chemical activity of the base metal of said needle, wherein said coating material is a noble metal including platinum, a platinum group metal, or gold,

wherein the instrument further comprises a liquid analysis apparatus for receiving the liquid samples collected by the needle.

14. (Currently Amended) The ~~automatic sampler instrument~~ according to Claim 13,

~~wherein said automatic sampler is included in an instrument further comprising:~~

comprises

~~— a liquid analysis apparatus for receiving the liquid samples collected by the needle; and~~

~~— a rinsing means for rinsing the needle after collecting the liquid samples.~~

Claim 15 (Cancelled)

16. (Currently Amended) The ~~automatic sampler instrument~~ according to Claim 3, ~~wherein said automatic sampler is included in an instrument further comprising:~~  
~~—— a liquid analysis apparatus for receiving the liquid samples collected by the~~  
~~needle; and~~  
~~—— a rinsing means for rinsing the needle after collecting the liquid samples.~~

Claim 17 (Cancelled)